

Opening Statement of Chairman Wittman

WASHINGTON— The House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel held a hearing today on the [Status of implementation of the requirements of the VOW Act and the recommendations of the Presidential Veteran Employment Initiative Task Force for the DOD Transition Assistance Program - Goals, Plans, and Success \(GPS\)](#). Chairman Joe Wilson (R-SC) made the following opening statement as prepared for delivery:

Witness testimony can be found on the [Committee Document Repository website](#) or linked below. All witness testimony is as prepared for, and embargoed until delivery.

"Today the Subcommittee will hear testimony on the Transition Assistance Program run by the Department of Defense, Department of Labor and Department of Veterans Affairs which assist transitioning military members as they prepare to separate from their military service to civilian life. Normally the military transitions just as many service-members back to society as they enlist every year; but during the next several years as the military reduces end strength, that number will grow, so it is critical that transitioning service-members are provided with the right information they need to make important decisions to support their future endeavors.

"When Congress established Transition Assistance Program in 1991, the military was also undergoing a drawdown; but it was not conducted after more than 10 years of combat with men and women participating in multiple combat deployments. The high number of deployments and the high unemployment rate for post 9/11 veterans has generated several changes that affect the program. First, the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 requires all service-members who have been on active duty for more than 180 days to participate in the program, second, the Veterans Employment Initiative Task Force made recommendations to revamp and improve the existing program to ensure members were provided the information and services they needed, tailored to their post military initiatives.

"Today we will hear from the witnesses about the status of implementation, the changes and improvements to Transition Assistance Program, and what mechanisms are available to indentify and share best practices, receive feedback from service-members and how does each agency define success.

I would like to welcome our distinguished witnesses:

